

Arch J. Flanagan, Sr.

Arch J. Flanagan was the son of Archibald H. Flanagan and Mary Bell. He was born Sep 20, 1864 and died Dec 15, 1923 in Farmville, Pitt County, NC. He married Martha Elizabeth Smith. They had two sons, Arch J. Flanagan, Jr. and Curtis Harper Flanagan. His was the third marriage between children in the Flanagan family and the Jesse Smith family. That might be understandable because the Flanagans and Smiths lived about three miles apart and were farmers and planters. The three miles were easily within buggy travel and with 10 Flanagan children and 21 Smith children; it is easy to visualize considerable traffic back and forth.

Most of the information included in these notes is from stories and remembrances of his sons and other family members. It is not known what his middle initial, J. was for but we do know that he was called Jay by most people and Cousin Jay (pronounced "Cudin Jay") by his extended family. In fact it is reported that even his wife, "Lizzie" called him Cudin Jay. Her sister "Sheba" had married his brother John and Lizzie evidently felt like a part of the extended family. Her brother, Ivy Smith, married Nancy Penelope Flanagan.

Jay grew up on a farm in the Farmville community. The farm is about a mile east of the town near a crossing of the Contentnea Creek called Chinquapin. He was active in the First Christian Church of Farmville and farmed all his life. When he married Lizzie he was an overseer on the Streeter farm. That farm was sold at auction and Jay bought the farm bell, which was struck in Baltimore in 1865 by Frank McShane. He inherited a farm about 4 miles from Farmville near the Greene County line on State Road 13 and added small parcels over the years including the adjacent "Moore" farm extending to State Road 264. The homestead on the first parcel burned but was replaced.

Cousin Jay was a hard working, conservative farmer and businessman. He was active during a period of the early growth of technology in farming, before use of tractors but after the automobile, which he never learned to drive. He had his sons drive him to and from town, church and the like. One story is that he tried driving and when the car headed for a ditch all he could think to do was yell "whoa!" That story may or may not be totally accurate but we do know he bought one of the earliest cars in the township.

He was a strong willed person as most patriarchs were in those days. One man said it was best to avoid him if you could but that man was young at the time and could have easily been intimidated. He was a strong supporter of his church and probably stern in his family matters. He sent both his sons to college at Wake Forest and had both of them take courses of studies in premed. He was concerned about the future of farming (much the same today!) When he died, both sons came back home and became farmers. Now one his grandsons and a granddaughter own the divided farm and are worried about the future of farming too.

The extended family respected Cousin Jay. He and Lizzie did not marry as early as many couples did in that day and he was a supporter of many in the family before and after